

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

CENTRAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY

ACCESSION NO. 35431

CALL No. 934.0 1995/ Ven.





20/11/18
Dr. Venkayya

THE PALLAVAS

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE

SOUTH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25-1-11 BY

RAI BAHADUR V. VENKAYYA, M.A.,

Government Epigraphist,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD

on the 21st January, 1907.



Price Four Annas

G. A. NATHAN & CO. ESTABLISHMENT

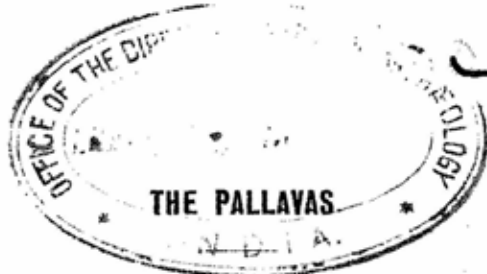
Madras

145/40

CENTRAL ARCH ZOOLOGICAL
LIBRARY, N. H. II.

Acc. No. 35431
Date 7-2-1960
Call No. 935.01995

Vern



THE word 'pallava' means in Sanskrit 'a sprout,' and the dynasty with which we are concerned claims to be so called, because the progenitor, who is said to have been the son of the *Mahabharata* hero Asvatthaman by a celestial nymph, was laid on a litter of sprouts soon after he was born. This is the derivation furnished by two inscriptions, where the name, instead of being applied to the tribe, is given to the first king. In the *Mahabharata*, as well as in the Puranas, the name is applied to the tribe and not to an individual.

The Andhra king Gotamiputra claims to have defeated, about A. D. 130, the Pahlavas along with the Sakas and Yavanas. In the Junagadh inscription of the Kshatrapa king Rudradaman, belonging to about A. D. 150, mention is made of a Pahlava minister of his named Suvisakha. The form Pahlava, which occurs in the earliest records, does not support the fanciful etymology above referred to, but connects the tribe with the Persians. And Professor Weber was of opinion that the Arsacidan Parthians must be meant

1202

by the term Pallava. It seems, therefore, pretty certain that the Pallavas were of foreign origin. The evidence derivable from architectural monuments points to the same conclusion. Speaking of the *rathas* at the Seven Pagodas, Fergusson remarks : "The people, whoever they were, who carved them seem suddenly to have settled on a spot where no temples existed before and to have set to work at once and at the same time to fashion the detached boulders they found in the shrine into nine or ten *raths* or miniature temples."

Thus the Pallavas probably came from Persia and gradually fought their way across India and finally settled in Conjeeveram. Mr. Vincent Smith thinks that their movement from the West must have occupied a considerable time, and remarks that it may be assumed to have ended before A. D. 150. To my mind, there are difficulties in accepting this date for their settlement at Conjeeveram. But it was, perhaps, their defeat at the hands of the Andhra king Gotamiputra, that compelled them to seek their fortunes further south and beyond the Andhra dominions. Linguistic considerations, derivable from the earliest known Pallava records, have led Professor Hultzsch to conclude that they could not be far

removed in point of time from the Andhra period. Mr. Smith observes that the 3rd century A. D. is "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history, and almost every event of that time is concealed from view by an impenetrable veil of oblivion. Vague speculation, unchecked by the salutary limitations of verified fact, is, at the best, unprofitable; and so we must be content to let the Andhras pass away in the darkness." It is reasonable to suppose that the Pallavas took the place of the Andhras after the latter ceased to be the ruling power. Accordingly, until more satisfactory evidence is forthcoming to fix definitely the date of the Pallava migration to the south, it may be assumed that they had become established in Conjeeveram about the end of the 3rd century A. D.

The existence of the dynasty, as well as its history, have been unearthed mainly through the efforts of epigraphists. The family was entirely forgotten, and only a few traces of its existence could be found in South Indian literature. This is partly due to the fact that the bulk of the existing literature came into existence after the Pallavas had ceased to be the dominant power in the south. But Mr. Vincent Smith remarks: "The Pallava power was superimposed upon the

ancient territorial states, much in the same way as the Mahratta power was in later times, and presumably was confined ordinarily to the levying of tribute and blackmail. This view of the nature of Pallava government explains the facts that its existence was forgotten, and that tradition never assigned normal recognised limits to the Pallava dominions as it did to the Chola, Pandya and Chera."

The earliest known records of the Pallavas are three Prakrit copper-plate charters, one of which has been found in the Kistna District, while the finding place of the other two is not known. Two of them present to us a king named Sivaskandavarman, presumably the son of a king named Bappa. Mr. Vincent Smith is of opinion that the former reigned in the middle of the 2nd century A. D., though reasonable doubts may be entertained as to the correctness of this view. In one of the charters Sivaskandavarman figures as the heir-apparent (*yuvamaharaja*) and as the reigning king in another. These two charters give us a glimpse into the ancient history of Southern India, which it is worth our while to examine for a moment. In the first place, Sivaskandavarman probably belonged to a period considerably later than the occupation of Southern

India by the Pallavas, whenever that might have been. The king is said to belong to the Bharadvaja *gotra*. The earlier grant was issued from Conjeeveram, while the order contained in it was addressed to the provincial governor at Dhana-kada, i.e., Amravati in the modern Guntur District, and the village granted was situated in the Andhra country (Andhrapatha). It thus appears that the Pallava dominions included at the time not only the Tondaimandalam in which their capital Conjeeveram was situated, but also the Telugu country as far north as the river Krishna. In the later charter, Sivaskandavarman is said to have performed the *agnishtoma*, *vajapeya* and *asvamedha* sacrifices. The last could have been undertaken only after conquering all his neighbours. That his dominions must have been extensive is clear from the grant which is addressed to "lords of provinces, royal princes, generals, rulers of districts, custom-house officers, prefects of countries," and others. The king's father had granted many crores of gold and one hundred thousand ox-ploughs. The land granted by Sivaskandavarman was to be "free from taxes from the taking of sweet and sour milk, from troubles about salt and sugar, from forced labour, from the taxing of oxen in succes-

sion, from the taking of grass and wood, from the taking of vegetables and flowers." It thus appears that, unless specially exempted by the king, the villagers were liable to all these taxes and imposts. The earlier grant threatens with corporal punishment those who transgress the term of the royal order.

2 The third Prakrit charter is later than the other two and mentions three generations of Pallava kings, viz., Vijaya-Skandavarman ; his son the Yuvamaharaja Vijaya-Buddhavarman and his son Budhyankura. These three Prakrit grants prove that there was a time, even in Southern India, when the court language was Prakrit.

Vishnugopa, of Kanchi, mentioned in the Allahabad pillar of Samudragupta, was probably later than the foregoing. There is not much doubt that Vishnugopa was a Pallava, and as the Allahabad pillar has been assigned to the middle of the 4th century, it is evident that the Pallavas had by that time become firmly settled in Conjeeveram.

The Sanskrit charters of the dynasty are later, and three of them furnish the genealogy for five generations, viz., Skandavarman ; his son Viravarman ; his son Skandavarman II ; his son the Yuvaraja Vishnugopa; and his son Simhavarman II.

The other two charters, which are later, furnish different pedigrees. The former are dated from Dasanapura, Palakkada and Menmatura. The grants belonging to this series have been found mostly in the modern Nellore and Guntur districts. A single one has been discovered at Udayendiram in the Gudiyatam taluka of the North Arcot district. But Professor Kielborn, who has re-edited the text, has called in question its genuineness. The fact that the earlier inscriptions of this series are not dated from Conjeeveram raises a presumption that that city was not the Pallava capital for some time during the interval. If this presumption is established by future discoveries, it may be concluded that the Pallavas were driven out from Conjeeveram by one of the indigenous tribes of the Tamil country—say the Cholas—and had to retire northwards for a time. The kings of this series are generally described as fervent *Bhagavatas* meditating on the feet of Bhagavat (Vishnu) and as being devoted to the feet of their fathers. They belonged to the Bharadvaja *gotra* and were the rightful *Manarajas* of the Pallavas, who were the abodes of the fortunes of other kings overcome by their own valour and who, according to rule, had performed many horse-sacrifices. Several kings of the series bore names

connected with Vishnu, such as Vishnugopa and Kumaravishnu. Perhaps, it was a time when the Vaishnava creed was in the ascendant. Future researches may prove that some of the Vaishnava Alvars flourished during the period. Vaishnava tradition has it that Tirumalisai-Alvar, one of the early saints, was ill-treated by the contemporary Pallava king, who had subsequently to repent of his conduct. The boast of these Pallava kings to have performed horse-sacrifices may prove to have been borrowed from Sivaskandavarman of the Prakrit charters, who must have actually undertaken the task. If my surmise prove correct, the Pallavas must have regained Conjeeveram towards the close of the period with which we are now dealing. The time when the kings who issued the Sanskrit charters flourished is not known. But, roughly speaking, they may be assigned to the 5th and 6th centuries A. D. The chief characteristic of Pallava history so far is that it has to be made out solely from copper-plate grants. No stone monuments of the period have been hitherto unearthed. Perhaps, the temples which did exist were of wood or some other perishable material. Mr. Fergusson says : " The conclusion seems inevitable that all the buildings anterior to the year A. D. 700 or thereabouts were erected in wood .

or with some perishable materials, and have perished either from fire or from causes which, in that climate, so soon obliterate any but the most substantial erections constructed with the most substantial materials."

The Pallava dominions probably comprised at the time the modern districts of Nellore, Guntur, Kistna, Godavari, Kurnool and, perhaps, also Anantapur, Cuddapah and Bellary. The Kadam-bas of Banavasi, who were originally Brahmanas, threatened to defy the Pallavas. The founder of the Kadamba family was Mayurasarman. He went to the Pallava capital in order to study the sacred lore. There he had a fierce quarrel with a Pallava horseman. What the cause of the quarrel was and how it ended we are not told. Like his much-abused compeer of the 20th century, Mayurasarman reflected: "Alas! that in this Kali age, the Brahmanas should be so much feebler than the Kshatriyas! For if to one, who has duly served his preceptor's family and earnestly studied his branch of the Veda, the perfection in holiness depends on a king, what can there be more painful than this!" Mayurasarman did not stop with mere reflection. He proceeded to take some action too. "With the hand dexter-

ous in grasping the kusa grass, the fuel, the stones, ladle, the melted butter and the oblation vessel, he unsheathed a flaming sword, eager to conquer the earth." Having overcome the frontier guards of the Pallavas, Mayurasarman occupied the inaccessible forest stretching to the gates of Sriparvata, and levied taxes from the circle of kings headed by the great Bâna. The Pallava king was shrewd enough to recognize the Brahmana's bravery, and took him into his service. Mayurasarman was rewarded with territory bordered by the waters of the western sea. Thus a powerful enemy was gained over and treated as a useful ally. The Brahmana warrior's successors do not, however, appear to have been amenable to friendly treatment. One of them named Mrigesavarman boasts of having been the fire of destruction to the Pallavas, and another called Ravi-varman is said to have conquered Krishnavarman and other kings and overturned Chandadanda, lord of Kanchi. Mr. Rice mentions a Nanakkasa-Pallavaraja as overcoming the Kadamba king Krishnavarman and assigns him to the middle of the 5th century A.D. Discussing the date of the Kadambas, Dr. Fleet concludes: "All that can be safely said is that the Kadambas are to be referred approximately to the 6th century, A.D."

Later Eastern Chalukya tradition refers to a battle between the Pallava king Trilochana and the Chalukya Vijayaditya, who claims to have come from Ayodhya in the north. The latter was victorious, but lost his life. The battle probably took place somewhere in the Cuddapah district, as the village of Mudivemu, where the queen of the victor took refuge after the battle, has been identified by Mr. Ramayya Pantulu with Peddamudiyam in the Cuddapah district. The event may be placed roughly in the 5th century A.D. Though this story is found only in records of the 10th century and is not corroborated by earlier inscriptions, it is evidently based on the belief current in the 10th century, that the Pallava dominions extended in those early times to the modern Ceded Districts.

From the reference in connection with the Kadamba Mayurasarman to the great Bâna, it may be presumed that the latter was a Pallava feudatory and that his dominions lay somewhere in the Ceded Districts. We are not now concerned with the later history of the Bânas, who claim to be descended from the demon Mahabali. It is enough here to remark that a Bâna king figures as a feudatory of the Pallava king Nandipputtarasar—apparently the last of the family, about

whom more will be said in the sequel. The Bânas seem to have played a very important part during the period subsequent to the decline of the Pallavas. Accordingly, so far as it is known at present, the only formidable opponents of Pallava expansion in the north during the period were the Kadambas. In the south, the Cholas, Pandyas and Keralas—or any one of them who happened to be dominant in the Tamil country—must have offered very serious obstacles. But, at present, we have no records testifying to the struggle.

We now enter into a period of Pallava history for which the records are more numerous. The facts available for this period are definite and the chronology is not altogether a field of conjecture and doubt. The earliest stone monuments of Southern India belong to this period. In fact, the foundations of Dravidian architecture were laid by the earlier kings of this series. The Pallavas now enter into a life-and-death struggle against the Chalukyas of Badami in the Bombay Presidency, which partly accounts for the expansion of the former in the Tamil country. The hostility between the two tribes became so intense, that each looked upon the other as its natural enemy. The history of this period consists mainly

of the events of the war with the Chalukyas which lasted almost a century and which seems to have been the ultimate cause of the decline and downfall of both the Pallavas and Chalukyas about the middle of the 8th century. The relationship which the Pallava kings of this series bore to the earlier ones is nowhere explained, though three of the latter are mentioned among the ancestors of the former in a Pallava copper-plate charter of the 8th century A. D. The earliest king of this series is Simhavishnu, who claims to have vanquished the Malaya, Kalabhra, Malava, Chola and Pandya kings, the Simhala king proud of the strength of his arms, and the Keralas. His son and successor was Mahendravarman I. The war against the Chalukyas apparently began during this reign. The causes which brought it about are nowhere stated. Pulikesin II., of Badami, who was Mahendravarman's contemporary, ascended the throne in A. D. 609 or 610 and soon overcame the great Harshavardhana of Kanauj—the hero of Bâna's *Harshacharita*. In the course of his *digvijaya*, Pulikesin II. turned his arms against the south. Pishtapuram, the modern Pithapuram in the Godavari district, was first reduced. Pulikesin then caused the splendour of the lord

of the Pallavas, who had opposed the rise of his power, to be obscured by the dust of his army and to vanish behind the walls of Kanchipura. This defeat seems to be acknowledged by Mahendravarman, who claims to have defeated his chief enemies at Pullalura. Pullalura is evidently the same as Pullalur, which is not far from Conjeeveram, and which, as you all know, was the scene of two battles between Haidar Ali and the English. The Pallavas were driven out of their possessions in the north, and their capital Conjeevaram must also have been threatened. The hostile army evidently advanced as far as Pullalur, where a decisive battle was fought and the enemy was driven back. The Chalukyas permanently occupied the northern part of the Pallava dominions, and Vishnuvardhana, younger brother of Pulikesin II., who was probably sent out originally as the viceroy of the newly-acquired dominions, eventually established himself at Vengi and started the Eastern Chalukya dynasty some time before A. D. 632. It is just possible that this defeat and loss of dominion in the north led them to extend their territory in the south. At any rate, no Pallava monuments—either documentary or architectural—have been found so far prior to the 7th century A. D. in the Tamil country.

The son of Mahendravarman I. was Narasimhavarman I., who retrieved the fortunes of the family by repeatedly defeating the Cholas, Keralas, Kalahhras and Pandyas. He also claims to have written the word "victory" as on a plate on Pulikesin's back which was caused to be visible, (*i. e.*, which was turned in flight after defeat) at several battles. Narasimhavarman carried the war into Chalukya territory and actually captured Vatapi, their capital. This claim of his is established by an inscription found at Badami in the Bombay Presidency—the modern name of Va-api—from which it appears that Narasimhavarman bore the title Mahamalla. In later times, too, this Pallava king was known as Vatapi-konda Narasingapottaraiyan. Dr. Fleet assigns the capture of the Chalukya capital to about A.D. 642. The war of Narasimhavarman with Pulikesin II. is mentioned in the Singhalese chronicle *Mahavamsa*. It is also hinted in the Tamil *Periyapuranam*. The well-known saint Siruttonda, who had his only son cut up and cooked in order to satisfy the appetite of the God Siva disguised as a devotee, is said to have reduced to dust the city of Vatapi for his royal master, who could be no other than the Pallava king Narasimhavarman. The great Tirunanasambandar visited Siruttonda at

his native village of Tiruchchengattangudi, and the *Demura* hymn dedicated to the Siva temple of the village mentions the latter and thus helps to fix the date of the former as well as of the Saiva revival of which he was the central figure. I shall soon have to say more on this subject.

The war with the Chalukyas resulted in the abeyance of their power for some time in their dominions. The Pallavas probably held the territory during the time of Narasimhavarman, his son Mahendravarman II., and during the early part of the reign of the latter's son and successor Paramesvaravarman I. The Kuram copper-plate of the last king gives a lengthy description of a fearful battle which was probably fought at a village called Peravalanallur. The battle ended in the defeat of the Chalukya Vikramaditya I., whose army consisted of several *lakshas* and who took to flight covered only by a rag. The name Peruvalanallur suggests that it must have been situated in the Tamil country, and if this be the case, the Pallavas must only have successfully repelled a Chalukya invasion. But Paramesvaravarman is said in other records to have destroyed the city of Ranarasika—a biruda of Vikramaditya I. Perhaps, the former repulsed a counter-invasion undertaken in consequence of his attack on the Chalukya capital,

Vatapi. On the other hand, Vikramaditya I. claims to have "received by surrender the town of Kanchi after defeating the lord of the Pallavas, who had been the cause of the humiliation and destruction of his family." If this be true, it may refer to the events which preceded the battle of Peruvalanallur mentioned above. At any rate, the Kurnool District, or at least a portion of it, which, as I have already pointed out, belonged originally to the Pallavas, passed into the hands of the Chalukyas. Two copper-plate grants of Vikramaditya and two of his son Vinayaditya have been found in that district. A fifth Chalukya grant, belonging to the reign of the former, is edited in the volume of Nellore Inscriptions, published by Messrs. Butterworth and Venugopaul Chetty. But, as the village granted by the charter has not been identified, it is not quite safe to speculate about the influence which the Chalukyas of Badami might have exercised over the history of the Nellore district. Paramesvaravarman's son and successor Rajasimha built the central shrine of the Kailasanatha temple at Conjeeveram, while the shrine close to it in the same temple owes its existence to Mahendravarman III., son of Rajasimha. Paramesvaravarman II., another son of Rajasimha, seems to have built the

Vaikuntha-Perumal temple at Conjeeveram, which is called Paramesvara-Vishnugritha in one of its inscriptions and Paramechchura-Vinnagaram in one of the hymns of the Vaishnava saint Tirumangai-Alvar. It is not likely that Paramesvaravarman I. built this temple, because no records of his reign have been found in it, while the death of Paramesvaravarman II. is referred to in the ancient records engraved on a wall of the verandah running round the central shrine. The events which took place after his death are depicted by sculptures cut on the walls of the same verandah. The Kasakudi copper-plates hint that there was some dispute about the succession after the death of Paramesvaravarman II. Nandivarman, also called Nandivarman Pallavamalla, a collateral cousin of the latter, is said to have been chosen by the subjects and to have been ruling the kingdom of Paramesvaravarman. At any rate, there is not much doubt that internal dissensions had set in in the Pallava family. This conclusion is borne out by the Udayendiram plates of the same king. Here we are told that his general Udayachandra killed with his own hand the Pallava king Chitramaya, who seems to have been allied with the Dramila princes. Though railways and telegraphs were unknown, we need not

suppose that the Chalukya of Badami were ignorant of the state of affairs in the Pallava dominions. Vikramaditya II., grandson of Vinayaditya, "having resolved to uproot completely his natural enemy, the Pallava, who had robbed of their splendour the previous kings born from his race, reached with great speed the Tundaka-vishaya (Tondaimandalam), attacked at the head of a battle and put to flight the Pallava called Nandipotavarman, who had come to meet him." The city of Kanchi was captured by the enemy. The procedure adopted by Vikramaditya after the capture of the Pallava capital shows that the frequent wars waged in India by ancient kings against one another did not much affect either the country or the peaceful inhabitants. In fact, the atrocities of later Indian warfare were unknown in early times. It is said of Vikramaditya that though he took Kanchi, he did not destroy it and that "having made the twice-born, the distressed and the helpless rejoice by continual gifts, he acquired great merit by granting heaps of gold to the temple of Rajasimhesvara," the ancient name of the Kailasanatha temple at Conjeeveram. Manu lays down the laws of war thus :

न सुप्तं न विसन्नाहं न नम्रं न निरायुधधम्
नापुध्यमानं पश्यन्तं न परेण समागतम् ॥ VII, 92.

“ (Let no man engaged in combat smite) one who sleeps ; nor one who is without the coat of mail ; nor one who is naked ; nor one who is disarmed ; nor one who is a spectator but not a combatant ; nor one who is encountering another ”.

जित्वा संपूजयेद्देवान्ब्राह्मणांश्चैव धार्मिकान् ।

प्रदद्यात्परिहारांश्च ख्यापयेद्भयानि च ॥ VII, 201.

“ Having conquered a country, let him respect the deities adored in it and the virtuous Brahmanas ; let him also grant immunities to the people and publicly proclaim safety to all.”

Megasthenes, who came to India in the 4th century before Christ, remarks as follows about the Hindu laws of war : “ For whereas among other nations, it is usual in the contests of war to ravage the soil, and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste, among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class as inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in their neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger ; for the combatants on either side, in waging the conflict, make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain unmolested. Besides they never ravage an enemy's land with fire, nor cut down its trees.” These principles observed in ancient

times and inculcated by Manu were evidently not forgotten in the 7th century A.D.

Returning to the capture of Kanchi by the Chalukya Vikramaditya II., we find that the event is corroborated by an inscription of the king found on a pillar in the temple of Kailasanatha. This defeat of the Pallavas by the Chalukyas seems to have dealt the death-blow to the sovereignty of the former. Thus the history of the Pallavas emphasises the oft-repeated lesson of Indian history that, when internal dissensions set in in a dynasty, its decline and disappearance is only a question of time. Powerful kings could by their personal prowess only put off the downfall to a more distant date. Pallava ascendancy came to an end about the middle of the 8th century, and curiously enough, their rivals, the Chalukyas of Badami, also ceased to be the reigning power about the same time.

Before tracing the later history of the Pallavas, it is necessary to refer briefly to the monuments of Pallava rule in the Tamil country. A few Pallava temples have been already mentioned. Architecture in stone began in the Tamil country with the cutting out of caves in the living rock. Eight of these caves have been discovered so far in the Tamil country,

niz., (1) the rock-cut caves at Trichinopoly, (2) the cave at Vallam near Chingleput, (3) the cave at Siyamangalam in the Wandiwash taluka of the North Arcot district, (4) the cave at Mahendravadi near Sholinghur, (5) the cave at Dalavanur in the South Arcot district, (6) the cave at Mandagappattam in the same district, (7) the unfinished caves at Panchapandavamalai near Arcot in the North Arcot district, and (8) the cave at Panamalai in the South Arcot district. The first five came into existence during the reign of Mahendravarman I. as testified to by the inscriptions contained in them. Of these five, the one at Mahendravadi is dedicated to Vishnu and the other four to Siva. They must have come into existence during the first half of the 7th century A.D., as their builder Mahendravarman I. flourished during that period. Of the remaining three the Mandagappattu cave might also have come into existence during the same period, while the Panamalai one is probably a little later. The Panchapandavamalai cave is, perhaps, the last of them all.

About the *rathas* at the Seven Pagodas, Mr. Fergusson says: "On the whole it seems more probable that their date is somewhat earlier than 700, but their execution may have been spread

over half a century or even more, so that absolute precision is impossible in the present state of the evidence. Still until some fixed date or some new information is afforded, 650 to 700 may, probably, be safely relied upon as very nearly that at which the granite rocks at Mahavallipur were carved into the wondrous forms which still excite our admiration there." This then is the approximate date of the construction of the *rathas* derivable from a study of the sculptures and the architecture. Let us see if epigraphical research helps us towards a closer approximation. The popular name of the Seven Pagodas is Mavalivaram, which is believed to connect the town with the demon, Mahabali overpowered by the God Vishnu in his *vamana-avatara* or dwarf incarnation. Mr. Rice is of opinion that the village owes its existence to the Bânas mentioned above as descendants of the demon Mahabali or Mahabali Chakravartin. But, in ancient Chola inscriptions found at the Seven Pagodas, the name of the place is Mamallapuram, which is evidently a corruption of Mahamallapuram, meaning 'the city or town of Mahamalla.' I have already mentioned the fact that Mahamalla occurs as a surname of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I. in a mutilated record at Badami in the Bombay Presi-

dency. It is thus not unlikely that Mahamalla-puram or Mavalivaram was founded by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman, the contemporary and opponent of the Chalukya Pulikesin II., whose accession took place about A. D. 609. Professor Hultzsch is of opinion that the earliest inscriptions on the *rathas* are *hirudas* of a king named Narasimha. It may, therefore, be concluded that the village was originally called Mahamalla-puram or Mamallapuram after the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I., and that the earliest of the *rathas* were cut out by him. The remaining *rathas* must also have come into existence during the period of Pallava rule, but, perhaps, at a somewhat later date. Other monuments of Pallava rule are the large tank at Mahendravaradi built by the Pallava king Mahendravarman I. and the reservoir at Tenneri in the Conjeeveram taluk. The original name of the latter was Tiraiyan-eri, which is mentioned in the Kasakudi plates. Other tanks must also have existed at the time. But these two are the only ones which can be identified with certainty.

The Pallavas appear to have been Saivas at first and accordingly adopted the bull for their crest and the club (*khatvanga*) for their banner. Some of the kings who issued the Sanskrit char-

ters were probably adherents of the Vaishnava faith as I have already remarked. Jainism seems to have flourished along with these two creeds and, if the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* is to be believed, was in the ascendant about the beginning of the 7th century A. D. There was a big monastery at Patalipuram, the modern Tiruppapuliur near Cuddalore. At Mayilappur, where this address is being read, there were Jainas at the time when Tirunāṇasambandar visited the place. The Pandya king Nedumaran was originally a Jaina but was converted to the Saiva creed by Tirunāṇasambandar. According to the *Periyapurāṇam* the saint Tirunāvukkarasar or Appar, an elder contemporary of Tirunāṇasambandar, was first persecuted and subsequently patronized by a Pallava king, who is said to have demolished the Jaina monastery at Patalipuram and built a temple of Siva called Gunadaravichcharam. As the younger Tirunāṇasambandar appears to have been a contemporary of the Pallava king Narasiṃhavarman I., the elder Appar may be taken to have spent most of his life in the reign of Narasiṃhavarman's father Mahendrarvarman I., one of whose surnames was Gunabhara according to the Trichinopoly cave Sanskrit inscriptions. The conversion of Mahendrarvarman I. to the

Saiva creed from a hostile faith seems to be implied in the wording of the same inscriptions. If all this be true, the Pallava king Mahendravarman I. must have excavated a number of rock-cut caves and dedicated most of them to Siva with the proverbial zeal of the new convert. Buddhism had also its own votaries, for the Chinese pilgrim Hinen Tsang, who visited Kanchi about A. D. 640, speaks thus of the religions of Dravida, *i.e.*, the Pallava country : " There are some hundreds of *sangharas* and 10,000 priests. They all study the teaching of the Sthavira School belonging to the Great Vehicle. There are some eighty Deva temples and many heretics called Nirgranthas."

As regards literature, it may be supposed that the hymns of Tirunavukkarasar and Tirunanasambandar and the compositions of the early Vaishnava Alvars were known ; also the Tamil classics, such as the *Pattupattu*, *Purananuru*, *Manimegalai*, and *Silappadigaram*. The Tamil *kural* of Tiruvalluvar must have been a work of recognised merit at the time. Kanchipura was probably the seat of Sanskrit learning, though the Brahmanas living in various parts of the Tamil country must also have zealously cultivated it. They must have been quite familiar with the poems of Kalidasa and

Bharavi. Some of them at least must have gone through Kumarila's works. We may even suppose that the *Brihatsamhita* of Varahamihira was oftener consulted than it is now. As regards the epics, it is interesting to note that provision is made in the Kuram copper-plate grant of Paramesvaravarman I. for the recitation of the *Mahabharata* in a *mandapa* at the village of Kuram near Conjeeveram. It is not likely that a Tamil translation of the epic existed already at the time. It may, therefore, be supposed that the Sanskrit original had to be read out and explained. The *rathas* and sculptures at the Seven Pagodas imply an intimate knowledge of Puranic lore. The great apostle of Advaita philosophy was, apparently, not yet born. As regards the other Dravidian languages, their existing literatures do not extend into the period of Pallava supremacy. About the country and the people we have the evidence of a contemporary. This is what the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang has to say : "The soil is fertile and regularly cultivated, and produces abundance of grain. There are also many flowers and fruits. It produces precious gems and other articles. The climate is hot. The character of the people is courageous. They are deeply attached to the principles of honesty and truth and highly esteem learn-

ing. In respect of their language and written character, they differ but little from the people of Mid-India." As descendants of the people about whom the pilgrim speaks, we have every reason to be proud of the testimony which he bears to their honesty and truthfulness.

A brief survey of the other southern kingdoms and their history during the period of Pallava supremacy may not be altogether out of place here. The Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms of the south are mentioned already in the edicts of the Maurya emperor Asoka, as you all know. Of their subsequent history, almost nothing is known from epigraphical records, until we get to the period of Pallava rule. In the inscriptions of the Andhraking Gotamiputra Satakarni, who boasts of extensive conquests, the southern kingdoms are conspicuous by their omission. But when we get to the 7th century, all the three figure among the tribes conquered by the Pallavas as well as by their opponents, the Chalukyas of Badami. There was a small Chola principality to the north of Dravida, somewhere in the Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. The Sanskrit inscriptions in the Trichinopoly cave show that the Cholas of the south must have been powerful and were treated with respect by the Pallava king Gunabhara *alias*

Mahendravarman I., who must have reigned during the first half of the seventh century. Though the extent of Chola territory at this time is not known, there is reason to suppose that it must have been very small. The capital was apparently Uraiyur near Trichinopoly. From the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* we know it was a Chola princess that married the Pandya king Nedumaran already mentioned as having been converted to the Saiva faith by Tirunāṇasambandar. The Pandyas appear to have been independent, and had, perhaps, to fight often against the intruding Pallavas. After driving the Pallavas to "vanish behind the walls of Kanchipurā," the Chalukya Pulikesin II. is said to have crossed the river Kaveri to invade the Chola country. "There", we are told, "he caused great prosperity to the Cholas, Keralas and Pandyas, he being the hot-rayed sun to the hoar-frost—the army of the Pallavas." This statement implies that he helped the former against the latter. Perhaps, the three were allied together against the Pallava. Though almost nothing is known of the history of the Cheras during this period, it is not unlikely that they combined with the Cholas and Pandyas frequently against the aggressive Pallava as they seem to have done during the reign of Pulikesin II.

About the beginning of the 7th century the Telugu and Kanarese districts of the Madras Presidency, which once belonged to the Pallavas, were annexed, respectively, by the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Western Chalukyas of Badami. In spite of the repeated boasts of the Pallavas to have conquered the Cholas and Pandyas, no inscriptions of the former have been found further south than Trichinopoly. It has, therefore, to be concluded that the Pallava dominions in the 7th and 8th centuries comprised only the Tondai-mandalam including the modern districts of Chingleput, North and South Arcot and the southern portion of Nellore. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang calls this tract of country Ta-lo-pi-cha or Dravida—not Tondai-nadu or Tondai-mandalam as it was known in later times. If this is not due to mere accident, it may be that the latter name had not yet been invented or at least had not become quite popular. Tondaiman, as the title of Pallava kings, is believed to owe its origin to the fact that an ancient Chola king had to recognize his offspring by a Naga woman from the twig of the *tondai* or *adondai* plant tied round his waist by his mother. He was accordingly known as the Tondaiman, and the province bestowed on him by

his father was known in later times as the Tondai-nadu. But the most ancient form of the name is *Tumdaka* in the Vakkaleri plates. *Tondai-mandalam* is found in a rock inscription of about A.D. 950 at Solapuram near Vellore. The later forms are *Tonda*, *Tundira* and *Tondira*. In Tamil literature, the ruler of Kanchi is called *Tondaiyar-kon* meaning 'king of the people of Tondai,' or some equivalent of that term. Until more ancient forms of the name are found, it is not worth our while to speculate about the etymology of the territorial term Tondai-nadu or about the historical conditions under which the name came into existence.

At what exact date the Pallava sovereignty came to an end it is not at present possible to say. But Nandivarman Pallavamalla, mentioned above as having been defeated by the Chalukya Vikramaditya II., is believed to be the last king of the family, and he seems to have reigned for not less than 50 years. This may take us to the 3rd quarter of the 8th century.

The later history of the Pallavas has now to be noticed. One branch of the family claiming some connection with the Gangas of Mysore occupied a considerable part of Tondai-nadu until the close of the 9th century. These have been

called Gauga-Pallavas in order to distinguish them from the other Pallavas. The former also claimed descent from the *Mahabharata* hero Asvatthaman and belonged to the Bharadvaja *gotra*. Five kings of the family are known, *viz.*, Vijaya-Dantivikramavarman, Vijaya-Nandivikramavarman, Vijaya-Nripatungvikramavarman, Vijaya-Kampavikramavarman and Vijaya-Aparajitavikramavarman. Other kings, who, to judge from their names, must have also belonged to the same family are: Vijaya-Narasimhavikramavarman, Vijaya-Skandasishyavikramavarman and Vijaya-Isvaravarman. The history of the family has not yet been completely worked out and, therefore, it is not possible to state what relationship the latter bore to the former. The initial date of the earliest king Dantivikramavarman takes us roughly to A. D. 760, which may overlap with the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla. Nripatungavikrama was apparently the most powerful of the family as his inscriptions have been found over a larger extent of country than those of the rest. Aparajitavikrama was evidently the last member of the family. In the battle of Sripurambiya (Tiruppirambiyam near Kumbakonam) Aparajita defeated the Pandya king Varaguna. The former was later on over

come by the Chola king Aditya and his dominions annexed by the Cholas about the end of the 9th century A. D. The Western Gangas of Gangavadi in the Mysore State and the Bânas were feudatories of the Ganga-Pallavas. The Bânas seem to have been governing a considerable portion of the North Arcot district, north of the river Palar. One of the chief towns, if not the capital, of the Bânas was Tiruvallam in the Gudiyatam taluka of that district. A number of kings of this feudatory family are known. But we are not concerned with their history just now. It is enough to remark that the Chola king Parantaka I., who reigned from A. D. 907 to about 948, claims to have uprooted the Bânas and to have made over their territory to a Ganga feudatory of his.

Side by side with the Ganga-Pallavas there was another family which probably claimed descent from Nandivarman Pallavanalla and which appears to have been reigning in a portion of Tondai-nadu and of the Chola country. Dantivarman-Maharaja of the Triplicane inscription; Vairamegan mentioned in the *Nalayiraprabandham* as the king of the Tondaiyar; Tellarrerinda Nandippottaraiyan, whose inscriptions have been found in Conjeeveram and a few villages in the

Tanjore district ; and Nandippottaraiyar, who belonged to the Pallavatilaka family, are the known names of this series of Pallava kings. The last must have been a contemporary of the Ganga-Pallava Nripatunga mentioned above. Future research must decide what political relationship the Ganga-Pallavas bore to this family. Dantiga, ruler of Kanchi, subjugated by the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III. in or just before A.D. 804, might have been either a Ganga-Pallava or a regular descendant of Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

The names of another series of Pallava kings are furnished by the Amaravati pillar now preserved in the Madras Museum. Curiously enough, the inscription has to be read from the bottom upwards instead of from the top downwards. Seven kings are mentioned here, and their ancestry traced to Bharadvaja through Asvatthaman and Drona. Some of the names occurring in this inscription figure among the ancestors of Nandivarman Pallavamalla. The last of them, Simhavarman II., is reported to have gone to the mountain Sumeru in order to plant a pillar of victory. He then crossed the Bhagirathi (the Ganga river), the Godavari and Krishnaverna rivers, and reached the town of Dhanyaghata, *i.e.*, Amaravati, in the modern Guntur district. There

he visited the Buddhist shrine and listened to a discourse on the law. The rest of the inscription is mutilated. The importance of this record for Pallava history is not apparent at present. But the alphabet in which it is engraved is not quite archaic. As the end is lost, we have no means of ascertaining if it is an original document or a copy of some older record. If it is the former, the kings must belong to a local family, which is mentioned nowhere else.

It has already been mentioned that the Ceded Districts once formed part of the Pallava dominions. Soon after the disruption of the Pallava sovereignty, a separate province, known as the Nolambavadi 32,000, came into existence. It comprised the greater portion of the modern Bellary district and the northern and north-eastern parts of Mysore. The capital of the province was originally Hemavati in the Anantapur district, called Penjeru or Henjeru in ancient times. The Nolambas claim to belong to the Isvaravamsa and were descended from Trinayana-Pallava, ruler of Kanchi, evidently identical with the king of the same name, who was defeated by the early Chalukya king Vijayaditya according to later tradition. In his *Mysore Gazetteer*, Mr. Rice gives a short account of the Nolamba kings. The

earliest records of the family belong to the 9th century A. D. At Dharmapuri in the Salem district has been found a stone inscription of Mahendradhiraja Nolamba, who boasts of having destroyed the Bâna family. The Nolambas also figure in Tamil records as committing cattle raids during the Ganga-Pallava period. Two inscribed stones found at Ambur in the North Arcot district refer to such raids. A later record found near Vellore mentions a chief named Tribhuvanadhira-Nulamba *alias* Pallava-Murari. These references show how far the influence of the Nolambas extended beyond Nolambavadi. The Western Ganga Marasimha II. (A. D. 963-64 to 974) boasts of having destroyed the Nolambas. The Chola king Rajaraja I. (A. D. 985 to at least 1013) also conquered Nulambavadi. Kampili in the Bellary district seems to have been the capital of this province during the period of rule of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Epigraphical references may be adduced to show that the Pallavas continued in that part of the country and that they exercised some sort of power as late as the 13th century A. D.

The Pallavas of the Tamil country seem to have taken service under the Cholas after the Ganga-Pallavas were conquered by Aditya about the end

of the 9th century A. D. Karunakara-Tondaiman who, according to the Tamil poem *Kalingattu-Parani*, led the expedition against Kalinga during the reign of Kulottunga I. (A. D. 1070 to about A. D. 1118), was a Pallava and was the lord of Vandai, *i. e.*, Vandalur in the Chingleput district. Among the vassals of Vikrama-Chola mentioned in the *Vikrama-Cholan-ula*, the Tondaiman figures first. In the war of Pandya succession, which took place in the 12th century A. D., the Tondaiman played a very important part and was the ally of Kubasekhara, one of the claimants. From the account of this war given in the Singhalese *Mahavamsa*, it appears that the dominions of the Tondaiman bordered on the Pandya country. In a Tanjore inscription belonging to a later period, the name Tondaiman is applied to a local chief named Samantunarayana, who granted to Brahmanas a portion of the village of Karundittagudi—the modern Karattattangudi. Thus the name actually travelled from the Pallava into the Chola country. There is, therefore, reason to suppose that the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai who bears the title Pallava Raja, is descended from the Pallavas, who form the subject of this paper.

In the Telugu country inscriptions have been found of local chiefs tracing their ancestry to the

mythical king Trinayana-Pallava, whose name figures sometimes as Mukkanti-Kaduvetti. These chiefs claim to belong to the Bharadvaja *gotra* and to have the bull for their crest. They were also lords of Kanchipura and devotees of the goddess Kama-kotyambika, i.e., the Kamakshi temple at Conjeeveram. Inscriptions of these chiefs have been found in the Cuddapah, Kurnool and Nellore districts and reach down to the 13th century. Thus, though the Pallavas ceased to be the ruling power about the middle of the 8th century A. D., the memory of their dominion was kept up in the Kanarese, Telugu and Tamil countries down to a very late period.

I am afraid some of you have come to the conclusion that this paper is much drier than you had expected and that it would be a very efficient substitute for a sleeping draught. But having dragged you so far, I cannot very well stop here. We have seen that there were descendants of the Pallavas as late as the 13th century A. D. As there is no tradition preserved of their emigration—say to Natal or to Mauritius or any other part of the world—it is our business to look round and see if there are any Pallavas in our midst beyond the royal family of Pudukkottai. The Pallavas are believed to be identical with the Kurumbas,

of whom the Kurambar of the Tamil country and the Kurubar of the Kamarese districts and of the Mysore State may be taken as the living representatives. The kings of the Vijayanagar dynasty are also supposed to have been Kurubas. On what authority the identification of Kuruba or Kurumba with Pallava rests I am, however, not able to say. In one of the inscriptions of the Tanjore temple belonging to the 11th century, a certain Velan Adittan is called Pirantaka-Pallavaraiyan, meaning "the chief of the Pallavas of Parantaka." Sekkilar, the author of the Tamil *Periyapurana*, was a Vellala by caste and got from his patron, the Chola king Ananapa, the title Uttamasola-Pallavaraiyan, meaning 'the chief of the Pallavas of Uttamasola.' Uttamasola and Parantaka are titles of Chola kings and the word *Pallava* seems to be used in both of these titles as an equivalent of *Vellala*, or the caste of agriculturists to which both of them belonged. In the Telugu country, too, some of the Reddis, who belonged to the fourth or cultivating caste, called themselves *Pallavaditya* and *Pallava-Trinetra*. Sir Walter Elliot has told us that Pallavaraja is one of the thirty gotras of the true Tamil-speaking Vellalas of Madras, Tanjore and Arcot. It is borne by the Chola Vellalas inhabiting the valley

of the Kaveri in Tanjore, who lay claim to the first rank. All these facts taken together seem to show that there was some sort of connection between the cultivating caste and the Pallavas in the Tamil as well as in the Telugu country. The available evidence is, however, not sufficient to formulate the nature of this connection. But it may tentatively be supposed that some of the Pallavas settled down as cultivators soon after all traces of their sovereignty disappeared. The other sections of the agricultural class were probably proud of their association and considered it an honour to be looked upon as Pallavas.

One word more and I have done. Gentlemen, please let me in conclusion assume a rôle different from that of the historical student. You have now before you the leading facts bearing on the origin, expansion and downfall of a tribe whom we have every reason to consider as foreigners. The details of the story are not yet complete, and, therefore, it is not yet time to see if the history of the tribe can teach us any lesson useful in the field of practical politics. But, proceeding on the available facts, we find a tribe from Persia migrating to India and gradually working its way down to Conjeeveram and further south as far as Trichinopoly. The tribe holds sway over the

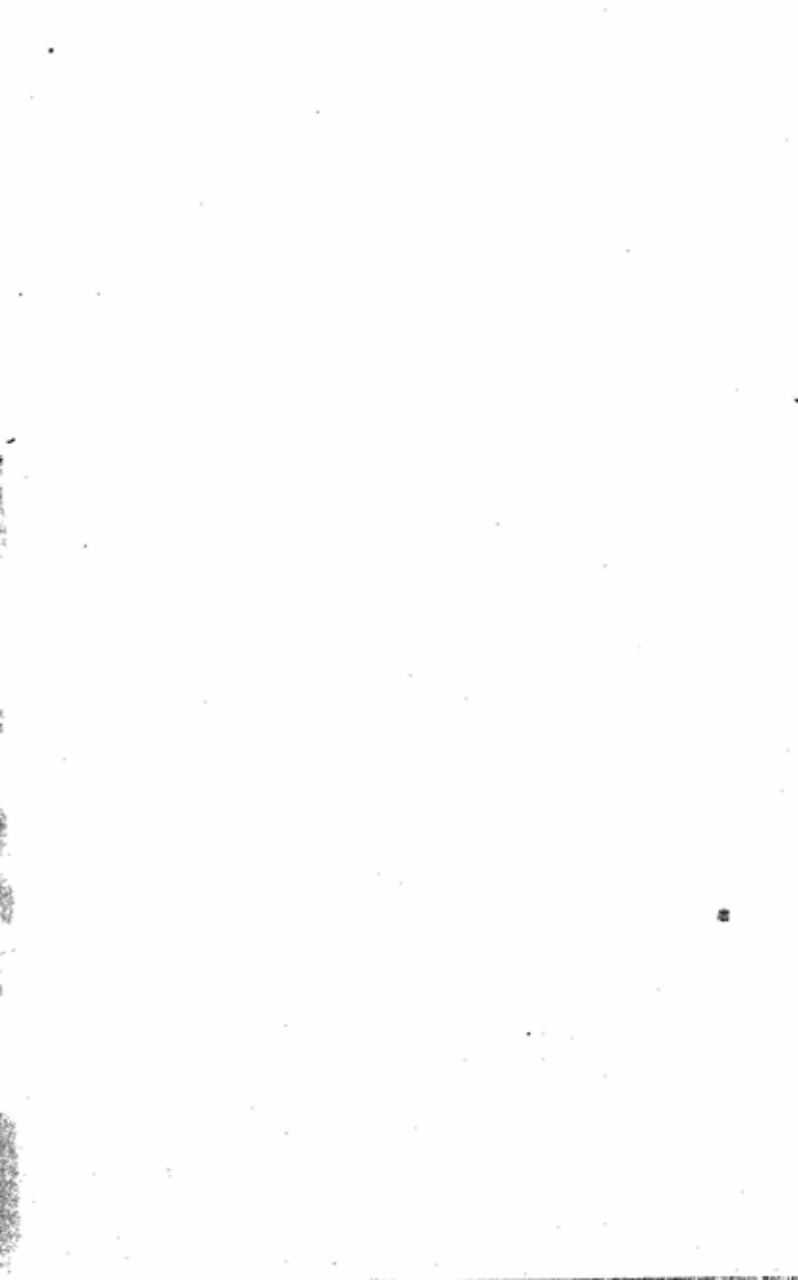
country for over five centuries and eventually settles down in the country. It gets so completely welded with the other inhabitants that it requires some proof to convince us that the Pallavas are in our midst.

Reflecting on the lesson to be learnt from Pallava history, I was led into the following train of thought. Whatever might have been the religion of the Pallavas when they left Persia, they were quite ready to accept the creed of the country, whether Saiva or Vaishnav, Buddhist or Jaina when they came to the south. It was evidently this circumstance that eventually led to their fusion and absorption with the indigenous tribes. This is what has happened in the case of a people who were quite ready to accommodate themselves to new religious surroundings. English history furnishes another instance of the fusion of two peoples, namely, the English and the Normans, where the difficulty about religion did not arise. The Muhammadans have been in India for more than ten centuries, originally as conquerors and subsequently as fellow-subjects. Not the slightest tendency has here displayed itself towards fusion. On the other hand, religious difference between the two races at last continue as strong as ever if they have not become worse.

35431

It is this fundamental difference of religion that has stood in the way of fusion and coalescence. Those who talk of the Indian nation seem to ignore this fact. It is, I suppose, fondly hoped 'that time would settle all religious differences. But history, as I understand it, teaches a different lesson. Differences of sect and creed in the same religious system may gradually disappear. But you will all admit that the differences between the Hindu and Muhammadan faiths are radical and will not disappear so easily. Consequently, this broad gulf must be satisfactorily bridged before the idea of national unity can be realised. In fact, religious unity seems to be an essential condition precedent of national unity. When the former is reached, the latter follows as a matter of course. Attempts made to secure national unity, without first realising religious unity, would at best result only in partial success, if they do not end in the frittering away of what little energy there is left in the country. This is what has struck me, and you may take my reflections for what they are worth.

(120) *End*





214/76
N 214

Central Archaeological Library,
NEW DELHI.

35431

Call No. 934.01995/Ven-

Author—Venkayya, Laxi
Bahadur V.

Title—The Pallavas

"A book that is shut is but a block"

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
GOVT. OF INDIA
Department of Archaeology
NEW DELHI

Please help us to keep the book
clean and moving.